Indian and Northern Affairs Canada / Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada

NWT Plain Talk

On Land and Self-government

Winter 2003

While inside, the Nahanni Butte Dene Band members participate in an information session on the Deh Cho Process, outside, the children of Nahanni Butte enjoy the land that is central to these negotiations.

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Plain Talk gets a tune up

Over the past two years, the NWT Region of DIAND has done research to find out what people in the NWT think of *Plain Talk* and other information products. People said they were interested in getting information about land claims and self-government and, while they liked some things about *Plain Talk*, they had a number of suggestions to make it more appealing and visible. Here's what we heard...

People and places

"I like to see pictures of my people," one focus group participant said. Over and over people told us they want to see themselves and people they know in *Plain Talk*. They also want more of a focus on what land claims and self-government negotiations mean for them and their communities.

Over the coming year, *Plain Talk* will be featuring more photographs and stories about the people involved in land, resource and self-government negotiations and the communities where these things are happening. But we can't be everywhere all the time. Do you have a photo you'd like to see in *Plain Talk*? Maybe you know someone we should feature? Give us a call or send us an email to tell us about it using the contact information provided on the back page of each issue.

If I don't see it, I won't read it

"You need to make information accessible and put it in various places around town," we were told. Right now, *Plain Talk* is distributed by mail to homes, schools, band offices and the like. People suggested other places *Plain Talk* could be placed, like local restaurants and coffee shops, the Northern Stores, adult education centres, community centres and other gathering places.

We think these are good suggestions and we will be looking at expanding our distribution over the coming year. Let us know if you think there is somewhere *Plain Talk* should be in your community.

Tell it like it is

People told us they liked the fact that *Plain Talk* was not overloaded with text and the font was easy to read. However, when it comes to the language we use in the stories, they didn't mince words. They told us to be straight forward and use everyday language.

Reaching young people

Plain Talk needs to do a better job of reaching young people, we were told. In Fort Simpson, one participant explained, "High school students should be the target of information because they are the future and are going to be running things in a few years." People told us that more photos and plain language would help. They also suggested featuring games and contests for young people, which we will do on the back page of every issue.

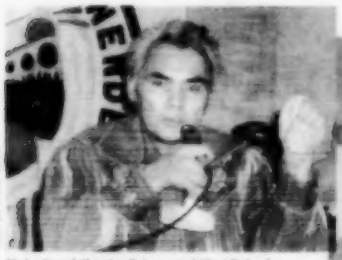
A new look for DIAND publications

There was one other factor that has influenced the way we redesigned *Plain Talk*. In order to make DIAND publications more identifiable, the Department has developed a "common look". The new colours of Plain Talk, the wavy flag and some other design elements are part of this new departmental look. Over time, you will start to see these design elements on most things DIAND puts out.

So that's our New Year's resolution. Let us know how we are doing by calling, or dropping us a note by email or mail. We'd love to hear from you, but remember to let us know how to reach you by providing a phone number, e-mail, or mailing address.

The purpose of our newsletter is to keep you informed on the progress of land and self-government negotiations in the Northwest Territories, and to provide some answers to frequently asked questions. We also feature the people and communities involved in negotiations, celebrate milestones, and announce upcoming events. On behalf of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), we hope you will find our newsletter informative and easy to read.

Closing the circle: Tlicho sign overlap agreements with Deh Cho and Akaitcho



Tlicho Grand Chief Joe Rabesca and Chief Richard Edjericon wore medallions that had been presented to Tlicho Chief Monfwi and to Akaitcho Chief Susie Drygeese at the signings of the original treaties.

"It has been many years since we sat in a room together and talked about the future. We can move forward." – Ndilo Chief Darrell Beaulieu

"In the past, we shared with each other. The document paper is strong and all Chiefs signed. It gives the First Nations in the North sharing rights to the land as before and they will not argue about the conflict any more."
– Elder George Blondin

"We're finishing a final link to the Dene Nation; we will speak with one voice and be strong. When we sign the document today, it's the final link and we're finally united as a whole." – Dettah Chief Richard Edjericon

Ndilo Councillor Fred Sangris witnessed the signing of the Tlicho/Akaitcho agreement in Rae and cheered when the last signature was on the page.

Celebrating their achievement (from left to right): Dettah Chief Richard Edjericon, Dettah Lutsel K'e Chief Robert Sayine, Deh Gah Got'ie (Fort Providence) Chief Joseph Judas, Gameti Chief Archie Wetrade and Tlicho Grand Chief Joe Rabesca.

Deh Cho Grand Chief Michael Nadli and Tlicho Grand Chief Joe Rabesca put pen to paper to confirm the agreement between their people.

"It just shows what happens when Aboriginal people work together."
– Participant

Akaitcho Chief Negotiator Sharon Venne goes over documents with Dettah Chief Richard Edjericon.

"The stars have all lined up and I think people are going to celebrate the friendship that hasn't existed for some time. I think today is going to be a great day."
– Dogrib Chief Negotiator John B. Zoe

Elders Leo Norwegian and Joe Migwi hug after signing the Tlicho/Deh Cho agreement as witnesses.

"It's really good for the Akaitcho and the Tlicho and it's really good for the people living within the two territories who are not Dene. This is a peaceful resolution to this and the Elders are extremely happy from my understanding."
– Sharon Venne, Chief Negotiator for Akaitcho

"I want to help the Yellowknives people's economy and the Deh Cho region. I want to support them too. If we don't do that, how are things going to be?"
– Tlicho Grand Chief Joe Rabesca

For a long time, it didn't seem possible. The issues can get complicated when more than one Aboriginal group has traditionally hunted, trapped, fished and travelled in an area. But last fall, with determination and hard work, Aboriginal leaders in the North Slave Region of the Northwest Territories sat down together to, as one Elder put it, "fix the boundary issues so we can all live together and so we can be strong and unified."

As a result, two important overlap agreements were signed. Discussions on a Deh Cho/Tlicho boundary had started in 1998 and, on October 31, 2002, in Fort Providence, an agreement was signed by Deh Cho Grand Chief Michael Nadli and Tlicho Grand Chief Joe Rabesca. The Chiefs came to an understanding about a way to describe how they will manage their overlapping territories, and agreed to work together to protect Edehzhie, a place of deep cultural and historical significance to both groups.

After 11 days of meetings, the Akaitcho and the Tlicho put together an agreement which was signed at the Dene Nation Leadership Meetings in Rae on November 27, 2002. In the Tlicho/Akaitcho agreement, both groups are free to hunt on the other's land, and agree to work together to

Bringing self-government into people's homes

The Beaufort-Delta Self-Government Office was set up in October 1996 to negotiate a self-government agreement with Canada and the GNWT, on behalf of the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit.

Since it was created, the Office has headed up a number of communications and public education activities throughout the Beaufort-Delta region. It also undertakes joint communications activities with the federal and territorial governments.

A priority for the Office is to make sure Gwich'in and Inuvialuit land claim beneficiaries and all people in the region understand self-government and have the opportunity to participate in shaping it. Because this work needs to happen at the community level, the Office has established an extensive fieldworker program in collaboration with the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit Beaufort-Delta community organizations.

Each community has one or two fieldworkers who provide information on self-government directly to community members through presentations, participation in community meetings and visits to people in their homes and on the land. They also administer surveys, conduct research and set up workshops on aspects of self-government such as constitutions and by-laws.

Fieldworkers also participate in a professional development program to increase their skills. This is an area where the Government of Canada has lent some support. At a recent workshop organized by the Beaufort-Delta Self-Government Office, DIAND was invited to deliver training on public communications. In addition, Canada's member of the Beaufort-Delta self-government Communications Working Group was invited to participate in order to meet the fieldworkers and exchange ideas.

This collaboration has enhanced the partnership between fieldworkers, Canada, the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit. "We were able to get to know one another on a more personal level, which I believe has really increased our sense of being a team and our willingness to work together," says Julie Jackson, the Office's Communications Coordinator.

Want to know more about the Beaufort-Delta Self-Government Office? Wondering who the fieldworker is in your region?

Visit the Beaufort-Delta Self-Government Office web site at **www.beaudelselfgov.org** or call **1-800-671-9026**

Beaufort-Delta self-government fieldworkers spend most of their time in their communities, but also get together for workshops. Left to right are Martha Bernard, Inuvik; Susan Beaumont, DIAND; and Archie Norbert, Tsiigehtchic. Seated across the table are Janet Kaczanik, Holman; Shauna Kaczanik, Inuvik; and Judi Lee, an instructor for Aurora Institute, Tsiigehtchic.

On the ground in the Deh Cho

In early December, when many people's thoughts were turning to Christmas preparations, a small crew of individuals involved with the Deh Cho Process was making its rounds through the Deh Cho region to update communities on the results of a year of research, consultation and negotiation.

As part of commitments they made in the Interim Measures Agreement signed in May 2001, representatives for Canada and the Deh Cho First Nations (DCFN) have been working out two interim arrangements. One, Interim Land Withdrawals, would temporarily protect some lands from new development during negotiation. The other, known as the Interim Resource Development Agreement, would see Canada share a percentage of resource royalties with the DCFN prior to a final agreement.

After a year of research and consultation with leadership, Elders, hunters, trappers, fishers and other community members, the agreements were presented to the people of the Deh Cho First Nations.

In spite of some unpredictable weather, which made travel touch-and-go, the team managed to visit most Deh Cho communities over the course of a week. Each meeting included a presentation about the Deh Cho Process, an explanation of the two agreements, and a review of detailed Interim Land Withdrawal maps.

Betty Hardisty goes over a 3-D map of the Deh Cho region with Deh Cho First Nations resource advisor Pete Czek during an information session in Fort Simpson.

Community members were then invited to ask questions and give feedback.

The desire to find a balance between the benefits of development and the need to protect the land and water was a consistent theme. However, as the Deh Cho is a large and diverse region, the team members also heard more specific interests and concerns in each place. "Each community is very autonomous and has its own unique circumstances," said Chief Federal Negotiator Robin Aitken, who attended the majority of the sessions.

For example, residents in Nahanni Butte were primarily interested in the protection that would be given to the South Nahanni watershed. The majority of the watershed has been proposed for withdrawal from new development, but some areas would remain open. Meanwhile, in Trout Lake, residents expressed concern about how a potential Mackenzie Valley pipeline could affect nearby Trainor Lake. Other communities wanted assurances they would have the means to influence the nature and timing of development in their areas to ensure it benefits the communities and its members.

protect the lands, resources and wildlife for present and future generations. They also promised to consult with each other on any decisions on land or resources that will affect the other's interests, and to work together to support sustainable, economic development.

Both overlap agreements were marked by celebrations. For many, the signing of the Tlicho-Akaitcho overlap agreement 'completed the circle' by restoring harmony to the Dene Nation by bringing together all the Dene chiefs to witness the event. In another way, the circle was completed too. With these two overlap agreements, the Tlicho claim area boundaries can now be drawn and the circle closed.

The agreements were the result of internal negotiations between the Aboriginal groups, without the involvement of outside governments. Chief Richard Edjericon remarked, "Our history is to sit down and talk about the issue and come to a solution." Not only were solutions found to challenging overlap issues, but friendships have been renewed and plans made to help each other build a good future.

Just Plain Fun

Land and self-government negotiations are serious business, but there is always room for a little fun. That's what this section of *Plain Talk* is all about! This is where you get to have some fun and test your knowledge.

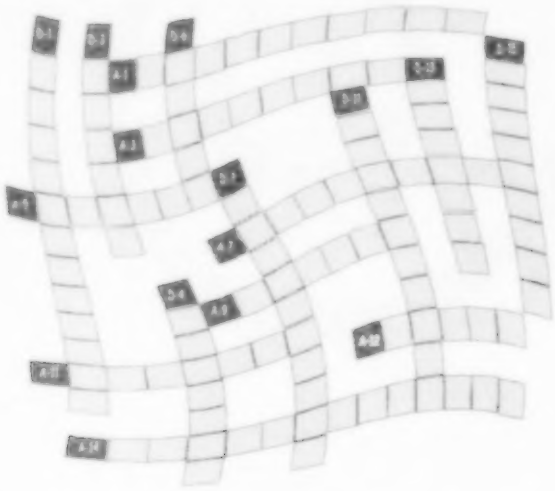
If you've read this edition of *Plain Talk* you are ready to do the crossword puzzle below. All the answers you need are found in the stories, photo captions and quotes on these four pages. The solution can be found below the crossword... but try not to peek!

ACROSS

- A-1 One group negotiating self-government in the Beaufort-Delta
- A-3 People want to see more of them in *Plain Talk*
- A-5 First Nation that signed an overlap agreement with the Tlicho on October 31 in Fort Providence
- A-7 Chief who wore a medallion at the Tlicho/Akaitcho overlap agreement ceremony
- A-9 Richard Edjericon is the Chief of ....
- A-11 Tlicho Grand Chief
- A-12 Deh Cho First Nations Grand Chief
- A-14 Gwich'in and Inuvialuit are negotiating self-government in this region

DOWN

- D-1 They provide information about self-government to communities in the Beaufort-Delta
- D-3 Word the Dogrib use to refer to themselves
- D-4 Type of agreement featured on Page 2
- D-6 Darrell Beaulieu is Chief of ....
- D-7 Aboriginal organization that recently held a leadership meeting in Rae
- D-11 A specific region of the NWT where more than one Aboriginal group has traditionally hunted, trapped, fished and travelled
- D-13 One group negotiating self-government in the Beaufort-Delta
- D-15 DIAND newsletter on land and self-government in the NWT



There are more facts, games and activities on DIAND's Youth Buzz
http://nwt.inac.gc.ca/youthbuzz

You were asking...

Q Why has the name "Dogrib" been changed to "Tlicho"?

A You have probably heard or seen the word "Tlicho" used lately, in place of "Dogrib". The Tlicho people have always referred to themselves as "Tlicho". As English speakers came into the area, the name "Dogrib", the literal translation of "Tlicho" in English, became more commonly used. In the Tlicho language, "Tli" means "dog" and "Cho" comes from the word for "rib". As part of their efforts to use, promote and support the Tlicho language, the Tlicho people are using the word "Tlicho" again. The name itself hearkens back to an old legend that tells of where the people came from.

Do you have a question about land or self-government negotiations in the NWT? We'd be happy to provide an answer. Contact the address listed below.

OUR VISION

The NWT region of DIAND is a respected partner in a strong and healthy Northwest Territories.

We strive for:

- respectful, effective relationships with Aboriginal people;
- creating and enhancing opportunities for all Northerners;
- responsible resource development in healthy ecosystems;
- northern control over northern resources;
- responsive and accountable northern government as partners; and
- national initiatives that reflect the interests of all Northerners.

On the web

Visit the following for more information:

Government of Canada programs and services:
Government of Canada issues page:
www.gc.ca

Various claims agreements:
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada site:
www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/agr/index_e.html

Plain Talk on the web:
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada site:
www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nt/pt/index_e.html

...something to tell us

Here's who to contact:

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Published under the authority of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Affairs Canada, 2003
http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca

QS-Y137-000-EE-A1
Catalogue No. R72-284/2003E
ISBN 0-662-28568-9

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Cette publication peut aussi être obtenue en français sous le titre *Franc parler*

Plain Talk on Land and Self-government is produced by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in the NWT to help northerners understand these concepts, how they work, and what they mean to our day-to-day lives. It is not a legal document.